

Members

Sen. Robert Jackman, Chair
Sen. Thomas Weatherwax
Sen. Connie Sipes
Sen. Billie Breaux
Rep. Rich McClain
Rep. William Ruppel
Rep. Greg Porter
Rep. Dennie Oxley



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EDUCATION MATTERS EVALUATION COMMITTEE

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 18, 1999
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 404
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 4

Members Present: Sen. Robert Jackman, Chair; Sen. Thomas Weatherwax; Sen. Connie Sipes; Sen. Billie Breaux; Rep. William Ruppel; Rep. Greg Porter; Rep. Dennie Oxley.

Members Absent: Rep. Rich McClain.

Sen. Robert Jackman, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order and asked that the following items be introduced as official documents: (1) a position statement from the Indiana Association of School Psychologists regarding assessment of students with learning disabilities (Exhibit 1); and (2) an annual self assessment master list from the Department of Education (DOE), Division of Special Education, regarding the monitoring of students with disabilities (Exhibit 2).

Sen. Jackman indicated that he saw no legislation coming from the Committee at this time, and that the best course of action would be to allow HB 1050-1999 to do what it is intended to do without the complication of additional legislation.

Committee Discussion. Sen. Weatherwax indicated that he would like to allow HB 1050-1999 to work. He added that the process of test administration is important. The existing waiver process should be the focus of the Committee at this time, not additional legislation.

Sen. Breaux responded that although she respects the charge of the Committee and the focus of the waiver provision, she has other concerns regarding the ISTEP+ Graduation Examination

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and students with disabilities in general. Sen. Jackman responded that any member of the Committee could introduce separate legislation regarding any concern pertaining to ISTEP+, but that the Committee would not do so.

Rep. Ruppel indicated that he had heard from parents that the current waiver provision would not help certain students graduate with a diploma. He continued that he would like to consider other assessment initiatives such as end-of-course examinations that might be of more help to such students.

Sen. Weatherwax added that he does not want to see the process of test assessment and administration micro-managed. It would be better to allow DOE to monitor HB 1050-1999 and to collect data regarding performance. He concluded by stating that it is the job of the DOE and of educators to monitor student progress.

The discussion then led to what a grade of “C” actually means for a student with a disability. Rep. Ruppel expressed concern that certain students with disabilities might receive grades based on what other students can do.

Robert Marra, Director, Division of Special Education, DOE, indicated that students with disabilities should receive grades based on the same standards as other students, but with a different focus on how they are taught the standards. He stated that HB 1050-1999 will accomplish this if allowed to work. He assured the Committee that Rep. Ruppel’s concerns would be addressed by HB 1050-1999.

The Committee discussed the waiver provision and how it could be made more flexible by changing the requirement of “C” to a “passing grade” based on a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP). Sen. Sipes agreed and commented that a student’s individual needs should always be addressed during the assessment process.

Closing Remarks by the Chair. Senator Jackman stated that there would be opportunities for the Committee to meet again, and that he would call the Committee together in the future if necessary. He reiterated, however, that there would be no legislation coming out of the Committee at this time.

There being no further discussion, Senator Jackman adjourned the meeting shortly after 11:00 am.